

VZCZCXRO1400
PP RUEHAG RUEHROV
DE RUEHRO #0903/01 1201629
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
P 301629Z APR 07
FM AMEMBASSY ROME
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 7882
INFO RUCNFUR/DARFUR COLLECTIVE PRIORITY
RUCNMEM/EU MEMBER STATES COLLECTIVE PRIORITY
RUEHGG/UN SECURITY COUNCIL COLLECTIVE PRIORITY
RUEHFL/AMCONSUL FLORENCE PRIORITY 2348
RUEHMIL/AMCONSUL MILAN PRIORITY 8598
RUEHNP/AMCONSUL NAPLES PRIORITY 2506
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK PRIORITY 0738

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 ROME 000903

SIPDIS

NOFORN
SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 04/24/2017
TAGS: [PREL](#) [KPKO](#) [UNSC](#) [SU](#) [IT](#)
SUBJECT: DARFUR: ITALY AGREES PRESSURE NEEDED, BUT WANTS
TIME FOR DIALOGUE

REF: A. STATE 52648

[1](#)B. ROME 627

ROME 00000903 001.2 OF 002

Classified By: Acting Political Minister-Counselor Jonathan R. Cohen for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

[1](#)1. (C) Summary. Italy would ultimately support a UNSC sanctions resolution against Sudan, but publicly would like to maintain a neutral position as chair of the UN Sanctions Committee. Given UN Secretary General Ban's heavy involvement in Darfur, which he underlined in a visit to Rome April 18, Italy believes the international community should give Ban some additional time to try to secure cooperation from Khartoum. However, if President Bashir makes another step in the wrong direction, this could be the signal that dialogue is not working. While Italy agrees the international community cannot be seen as doing nothing on Darfur, the MFA has doubts that sanctions will ultimately be effective. Targeting the GOS could strengthen extremist elements in Khartoum, the MFA worries, while simultaneously allowing the rebels to claim they have (at least the tacit) support of the international community. End summary.

[1](#)2. (U) Poloff delivered Ref A points to Fabrizio Pignatelli, Horn of Africa Office Director, April 23 and to Gabriella Biondi, UN Office, April 24, requesting Italian support for a UNSC sanctions resolution against Sudan.

[1](#)3. (C) Pignatelli and Biondi said Italy would ultimately support a UNSCR on Sudan, but stressed that the GOI would like to give UNSYG Ban Ki-Moon additional time for dialogue before turning to sanctions. Ban had asked repeatedly for more time, as had UN Special Envoy Jan Eliasson, and Bashir recently accepted the Heavy Support Package, Pignatelli noted. The GOI was hopeful there might be progress if dialogue continued and the UN, AU, Libya, Eritrea, and Egypt continued to place pressure on Khartoum. Poloff responded that the President had acknowledged Ban's request for time, but that we were not prepared to wait beyond a short period to see progress from Bashir.

[1](#)4. (C) According to Biondi, Ban highlighted his efforts on Darfur as a top priority while in Rome April 18. Italian FM D'Alema told Ban Italy wanted to continue to support political efforts for peace in the region, and offered to evaluate if Italy could increase its military contribution, Pignatelli said. Pointing to other mediation efforts,

Pignatelli noted that the outcome of talks in Tripoli April 28 would be an indicator of whether progress would be possible. While Italy agreed additional pressure on Khartoum was needed, Pignatelli argued it could come from increased involvement by China, the Arab League, and Egypt. He noted that the Arab League Summit had served this purpose.

¶15. (C) Pignatelli stressed that dialogue and continued visits to the region were key to getting forces on the ground, and that sanctions could strengthen the position of more extreme figures in the Khartoum leadership while disrupting tripartite talks (Ref B). Sudan could close off dialogue with the international community and begin to open up to countries like Iran, also endangering the Comprehensive Peace Agreement in Southern Sudan, Pignatelli said. Meanwhile, rebel groups could interpret international action against the GOS as a sign of support for their actions, making it less likely they would come to the negotiating table. Khartoum had recently taken a step in the right direction, Pignatelli said, and the GOS expected recognition.

¶16. (C) While Italy supported Ban's plan for additional dialogue, Pignatelli agreed there should be a moment of truth--talks could not continue indefinitely. However, if Bashir was ready to agree to the UN-AU hybrid force in a few weeks, imposing sanctions would likely close the door on that possibility. It would be prudent to wait a little while longer and maintain GOS involvement, Pignatelli said.

¶17. (C) Biondi argued that, while the international community could not sit back and do nothing, the GOS should be given a little more time. A step backwards by Bashir would signal that Ban's approach was not working. Italy was not against Sudan sanctions in principle, Biondi said. Pointing to Italy's institutional role as President of the UN Sanctions Committee, she stressed that the GOI would seek to remain publicly neutral on the subject.

ROME 00000903 002.2 OF 002

¶18. (C) Comment. A clear signal from a third party that discussions have reached a dead end would be helpful in securing GOI support for sanctions. Italy believes we should wait to see if Bashir keeps moving forward, and would be more willing to support UNSC action in response to a new negative step from Khartoum. End comment.
Spogli